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THE TIN KITCHEN



J. H. WEEKS

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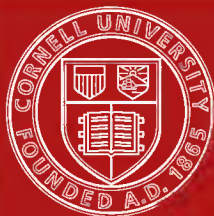
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"In whose house I was living." — *Old Clock*, page 29.

THE
TIN KITCHEN

BY
J. HATTON WEEKS

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PREFACE.

THESE stories were included in an entertainment furnished by me for one of the regular meetings of the Westboro' Historical Society.

It was not my purpose, in the beginning, to do more than provide a pleasant hour for the members.

The stories are now printed, however, in response to a call, on the part of many, for their publication.

J. H. W.

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THE TIN KITCHEN.

YOU would not think, to look at me, that I was young and handsome once, would you? Of course not. Folks nowadays don't seem to care much about the looks of their kitchen servants. But once they did, I'd have you to know. My! what powerful scrubbin's I've took in my time. My reflections are painful still; but my appearance was worth it all!

In these days folks want us to keep strong and have a civil tongue; then they'll excuse the looks. But if *I* had a tongue like our parson's or old Suke

Burton's, I'd let folks see that we have feelings as well as them, and can be hot or cold accordin'.

But there! I did n't let myself be dragged out of the dust just to scold, but to refresh myself with a little gossip.

My complexion is n't so good as it once was, when many a spruce-looking feller and pretty girl has told me to my face (or rather my back) that I was just as good as a lookin'-glass, I was so slick and shiny. And them was the days when there wasn't a lookin'-glass in more'n one house in ten in the town, and folks had to comb their hair before a pane of window-glass with something put up behind it—or over a pail of water. And the last thing that Marm Ewen did on a summer Sabbath morning, before settin' out for the meeting-house, was to put on

tell you anything of parties and parson's calls and such in the best room. In all my long life at Clark Ewen's I was never allowed to cross the front entry.

O my land! it was so aggravatin' to stand and stand there on my four legs on the shelf and imagine what there was in

one house in ten in the town, and folks had to comb their hair before a pane of window-glass with something put up behind it—or over a pail of water. And the last thing that Marm Ewen did on a summer Sabbath morning, before settin' out for the meeting-house, was to put on

her calash, settin' right before me to see if she 'd got it on straight. But what's that? You want me to stop talkin' about myself and tell you something about the folks I've lived with? Well, if this was n't the only chance I'd got for perhaps another fifty years to have a talk, I'd be mad enough to shut right up and not say another word. But if you'll stop fidgetin', and let me take my own time and way, I'll get 'ronnd to something, sooner or later. So here goes. I ain't used to society, — I guess you see that, — so I can't tell you anything of parties and parson's calls and such in the best room. In all my long life at Clark Ewen's I was never allowed to cross the front entry.

O my land! it was so aggravatin' to stand and stand there on my four legs on the shelf and imagine what there was in

that room and what was going on there! But it was worse to stand there and look down on Marm Ewen as she bustled and scrubbed and cooked. My sakes! that woman was a walkin' mop, dish-pan, broom, and churn all in one! Not a speck of dust anywhere — and stingy and savin'! Now, I ain't sayin' anything against Marm Ewen, because I do hate to hear anything like backbitin'. I don't mean to wrong *her*; I'm only aimin' at her weaknesses — that's all. But she did make a mighty smart wife for Mr Ewen — though folks had a way of sayin' that he was particular fond of outdoor air, and took great comfort in the scenery and the society of his barn critters. But then, there's other husbands that find the air indoors rather stiflin', most of the time.

If 't was stupid in the daytime. just



"And took great comfort in the scenery and society of his barn critters."

watchin' Marm Ewen at work, what do you suppose it was in the evenin', with them two on opposite sides of the fire-place: Mr. Ewen with his chin down in his bosom somewhere, snorin' dreadful, and Marm Ewen just knittin' and patchin' for dear life, and looking up once in a while to see if 't was time for evenin' prayers. And as soon as nine by the clock had struck, she'd roll up her cloth, or stick her odd knittin'-needle through the ball of yarn, and then she'd cross over and nudge Mr. Ewen and say: "Prayers!" And he'd wake and look up as if somebody was goin' to cut his throat, and she'd always look hurt and solemn-like at him, every time.

Company? Not much; except once in so often at Thanksgivin'-time, when it come her turn to have all their relations.

But I could see it was an awful cross to her.

Then I had *my* good times! There was n't one of all them relations that did n't take an awful interest in me, and come lookin' over my shoulder, and sniffin' and sayin' how nice I smelled. And then they would all get there together, and all their tongues a-clackiu' at the same time. Then all the family doings got an airin'. It give me a great deal of enjoyment, and something to think about till they come there again.

Thanksgivin' day is n't the time to keep folks in the best room, where there ain't anything to look at but a horse-hair sofy, a bunch of coral, a wreath of wax flowers, and the picture of a tomb, with a widder hangin' over the corner with her right eye covered with her best pocket handkerchief. Even the barn looks cheerfuller!

But my! how I am goin' on! Did n't ever anything happen at our house? Not often. But there *was* something funny that I think you 'll be interested in hearin' about.

We did really have a donation party for the minister, once. Suke Burton was the one that got it up. If you've ever had anything to do with such a thing, you know it needs a pretty good talker to start it; and she had the name of havin' lots of gab.

Well, she worked up a good deal of interest, finally, and so many folks said they intended to be present that there was n't a house in the town big enough for the party but ours. And so Suke come, with the two deacons, and asked Marm Ewen if they might have the party to our house. Well, she was so took

aback that she said "Yes," before she knowed what she was doin'.

There was a week between then and the party — and such a time! Mr. Ewen spent more time viewin' the scenery and admirin' the live-stock. How that woman did slave, tho'! Why, there were men and women, near neighbors, who'd never been inside her best room, she was so powerful choice of it; and she went round thro' all the rooms, takin' out everything she thought would be hurt, — the lookin'-glass, and the sofy, and the tomb, from the best room, and all the chaney and glass from the cupboard. She took the carpet off the stairs, and locked the door of the best bedroom. And she got the hired man to put boards in the windows in the livin'-room, so that none of the wild young fellers

could put their heads or elbows thro' the glass.

Mr. Ewen asked Marm Ewen what she was goin' to give the parson. And she said: "Givin' the house is enough, I should say." But he held on that they could n't be so mean as that, and *he* was goin' to kill one of the young geese for the supper. And *she* said she was n't goin' to have one of her nice geese eat up by all that crowd. But if he was so set, she said, he might take the old gander; she was tired of seeing him round. And *he* said they could n't get a tooth thro' him. And *she* said: "All the better; he will go further and last longer!" And so it ended, of course, in the old gander bein' killed and roasted. When they put the old critter in my arms I wanted to tip myself and him into the fire. "But," I thought,

“it’s all for the parson, poor man, and I’ll do *my* part and make him as brown and juicy as I can.”

At last the evening come; and the folks filed in as stiff as a row of trees And when they was all there, and settin’ ’round the tables in our big kitchen and livin’-room, after leaving their pork and pin-cushions in the sink-room, the parson said a blessing and the real fun begun.

What should that Suke Burton do but put that gander down before the parson to carve! But he *did* look plump and fine, if I *do* say it,—I mean the gander; the parson was a powerful thin, plain man, himself.

Well, he struck out to wing the feller; but after giving that up as a bad job he sawed away at one of his legs till his arm got tired. ’T wa’n’t no use; and as

he was tryin' to jab a hole in him somewhere, and folks were getting to snicker, Miss Worthy, who had a spite against Marm Ewen, said, so's lots could hear: "He must be one of the critters that laid the gold eggs" — twittin' on his age, like.

"Try him on the stuffin'," said somebody.

And with that the parson put in the spoon, and shovelled some out on his plate. Land of Goshen! what do you suppose was in that stuffin'? Four big gold pieces, and they jingled and rolled out on the plate before everybody. And such a time of talkin' and wonderin' and laughin' as we had then! Marm Ewen looked red as the pickled beet in the glass dishes, and Miss Worthy looked as if she wished she had u't, and Mr.

Ewen looked everywhere but at the gander. Well, of course there was oceans to eat without the gander. And folks seemed to have a right good time all through. Marm Ewen couldn't say one word about how the money got into the gander, because she didn't know any more than the hitchin'-post, herself.

Well, well, and the party came to an end, and everybody went off home and left us alone again. And when the door closed on the last one, Marm Ewen, who had fire in her eye, and who'd just been boilin', she was so mad, begun to jaw Mr. Ewen, and she was goin' on at a great rate about his sin and extravagance, and his throwin' all that good hard money away on a minister that couldn't preach better than the coffee-mill, when Mr. Ewen drawed himself up as if he'd prepared

himself beforehand, and had “snuffed the battle from afar off,” and, holding out his hand, said, just as he would in town meeting: “Eliza Ann, the Lord has been good to us, lo! these many years. He has provided us with a comfortable home, and money in the bank. We hain’t chick nor child to need none of it. We’re both gettin’ into the sere and yellor. Now, what are we workin’ and slavin’ for but our own miserable selves! I allow half the property is yourn; you’ve helped me rake it together. But the other half is mine, and I’m goin’ to use it hereafter as I please. From this day on I’m goin’ to lead a higher and better life, and the Lord-a-Mighty have mercy on me, a miserable and undeserving sinner!”

With that he opens the back stairway door and goes off to bed. Marm Ewen

stood with her mouth wide open and her eyes staring — just as Elisha did, probably, when Elijah stepped into the chariot and went up. And when she heard Mr. Ewen's boots drop, one after the other, on to the floor above, she just sunk into a chair and put her hands up to her eyes, and then slid right down on to the floor herself, and I heard her kind of snuffle, and then say, soft and hushed-like: "O Lord, and *I've* been the miserabler sinner of the two! My eyelids have been stuck together, my ears stopped! I've been takin' and never givin'. O Lord, forgive! O Lord, forgive me, a selfish woman!" And so she knelt there, rockin' herself back and forth, till the fire got low, and the candle got to smokin'; and when she smelled that she got up.

But you ought to have seen the break-

fast she put on the table next mornin'! Everything was there that Mr. Ewen particular liked, and she was as meek and pleasant as a pigeon. But I saw Mr. Ewen stop eatin' more than once to look at her, dazed-like, and once I caught him wipin' a tear off the end of his nose. He pretended it was the coffee that was too hot.

Things were better and brighter always after that. There was more company, and Marm Ewen joined the Dorcas and the Benevolent, and even went so far as to take two of the parson's boys one summer when he went off with his poor, frayed-out wife for a vacation. And anybody who knowed them boys can testify that they was a cross; and can wish that anybody that ever had the care of 'em may receive a crown laid up.

THE OLD CLOCK.

WE wooden folks have this advantage over you flesh and blood ones: we ain't never too old to mend. At any age we can be made to look as handsome and bloomin' as on the day we was born. I've been acquainted with a snarl of furniture that put on more style and set up for bigger punkins when they was a hundred than when they was ten years old.

And there's one fact I can't quite get over: our friends and admirers get to increasin' and multiplyin' just accordin' as our age lengthens. And as we grow shaky, and patch and paint ourselves,

and pretend to be something when we ain't, and the bolder and brassier we get, the more people swarm around us and seem to love us. But I notice that with you, things is different. It's mainly the handsome, and spry, and young that gets the attention; that 's mourned most if they get lost, strayed, or stole; that gather in all the plums and the fun. You put your old folks off in some back room when you have your parties, and receptions, and beaux, but you trot out all the old stuff in the way of furniture you can lay your hands on; and when you have fixed it up in a way to make it ashamed of itself, and to be a sight for the angels and such, you expect all your friends to kneel down around and worship it as if they was so many heathens. It may be nice for us to feel we shall be took

good care of, and that things will grow better and brighter for us to the end of time, but 'tain't so comfortable for the human bein's that are agin'.

Now, if somebody should take it into his head to give me a rubbin'-down with a sheet of sand-paper, ile my insides, and throw a thin coat of varnish over me, I calculate I might keep my good looks, without troublin', for another fifty year, and be much obleeged to him, too.

There's another advantage we clocks have over you folks: we see and hear every blessed thing without anybody makin' the least mite of objection to our bein' present. And nobody can tell from our faces whether we do know anything.

Nobody has ever dared to hint to me, under certain circumstances, that "three 's company." And I've never been sent

off to bed at early candlelight, as I reckon most of you have, though I do remember one young feller who came to set up with our Tilda sayin', when twelve o'clock was near, that he wished I'd be so obligin' as to run down. Run down! Shade of Bildad! When I've been taught that the meanest and most contemptiblest thing a clock could do is to run down! "I'll teach you, old feller," says I. And so, when twelve o'clock came, I just struck as loud and spiteful as I could, and that made the young folks jump, and they upset their chair, and the noise woke Tilda's father, and he come to the landing, and bawled out: "Say, Hank, don't be in" such a hurry; stay a few minutes longer and help us with the mornin's milkin', won't you?" I reckon the young spark made tracks then.

I've lived the best part of four lifetimes in the Atkins family. There has n't been much that has happened there that I did n't know all about it. Not a whimper or a growl out of me all that time; but I've heard a powerful lot of growlin' and jawin' — and some things some folks ought to be ashamed of. But there! most of 'em's gone now, and we won't rake over dry bones.

When I was young, folks lived mostly in the kitchen, and that's where I got most of my education. That's where they washed their faces and combed their hair. That's where the pig's leaf was tried out, and the gowns was fitted; that's where the funerals was planned; where the neighbors knit their socks and spun their yarns about other folks. And that's where some folks did their fightin' and makin' up, and their

prayin' as well. And; of course, the young folks did their sparkin' there.

It's a comfort to us clocks that people, now that they 're movin' from the kitchen to the best room, are concludin' to take us along with 'em. So we still hear and see all that's goin' on; and so, with the new woman, there's the new clock being developed and given a better education.

But I've been told that I can have but so many minutes for my talk with you this time, and I've concluded to spend them in talkin' mostly of our Tilda and her folks. Tilda was the daughter of old Josh Atkins, in whose house I was livin'. I'd belonged to *his* father, Squire Atkins, for some forty year; and so 't was common with Tilda, and Lem, her brother, to speak of me as "Gran'ther's" clock. Lem had good reason to remember me for the awful trouncin'

he got, once, when he was a little feller, and snarled himself up with my insides. There's one thing I will say, right here, about Josh Atkins. Though he was the tight-fistedest and opinionatedest and selfishest man for twenty miles 'round, and that's what everybody said of him, he never but once forgot what he owed me, and did his duty by me regular. Always to the minute he remembered to wind me up. And nobody but him ever cleaned my face and hands, and looked out that I should feel easy and comfortable.

He thought heaps of Tilda, in *his* way, and when she got old enough for beaux he was always jokin' her about a rich husband. Fellers from our town used to come around at first, but a hint from Josh was as good as a kick.

Tilda was one of the quiet sort, with

quiet ways and voice; never had any more color than bleached beeswax; and if there was one of them young men she perferred, she would n't 'a' dared let it be seen, for when her father, with his loud, roarin' voice, was about, she did n't dare say her soul was her own. He loved her same's a hawk does a chicken.

Mrs. Atkins, she was a little mite of a woman, and did n't seem to have any more will than Tilda. Sometimes, when he spoke up to her or looked at her when she was a-talkin' in a way he did n't like, she 'd shut up as quick and as tight as a trap when a rat has sprung it. But she *could* show spirit once in awhile, as on the day when old Josh — but I'm getting ahead of my story; I'll come to that by and by. Then there was Ike Saunders, the hired man, a good-looking sort of a feller, that Tilda



"She'd shut up as quick and tight as a trap when
a rat has sprung it."

must go and fall in love with — and he and she knowin' the old man would turn him out-of-door the minute he s'picioned anything. I thought it was so queer the old man didn't see nor hear anything. P'raps he thought Ike was n't worth noticin', being somebody he just ordered 'round to suit him.

I knew, and I've always thought Mrs. Atkins was knowin' to it long before she allowed she was; and not altogether because she was sentimental, and set a good deal by true love and pitied the young folks, was Mrs. Atkins a-shutting her eyes and ears and pertendin' all the time, but here was a chance to be even with Josh — he'd have something worth roarin' about now. And if he turned on her and jawed her, and raised his hand at her, she could just say back that she had n't done any-

thing, and cry, and ask: "Now, did I, Tilda?" And Tilda could answer, innocent and pure as an angel out of the sky: "No, indeed, Ma!"

When old Josh would get to talking about getting a rich husband for Tilda, he got to runnin' on about that constant, so's 't was worse than a slow case of typhus in the house, the way folks looked worried finally. I used to see Ike's mouth come together tight and his eyes blaze; but Tilda looked more bleached-like and scared, and would try to slip out of the room.

Exceptin' the old man, it was a queer, meek kind of a lot of people, and I got out of all patience with 'em. Even Lem, who used to be as wild as a deer, and up to all sorts of shins, had lost all his spunk, and was down to the corner when

he was n't workin' under his father's eye, and shot up to bed every night like a muskrat into his hole.

Why, Ike seemed to lack what the boys call "sand," nowadays,—that is n't very polite for a word, but I reckon you know what I mean. Oh, you do?

For all the pile of work he managed to get thro', he was kinder pale and spindlin', and I always felt as if Tilda had a kind of mother-love for him, different from most. But he worshipped Tilda; followin' her with the eyes of a dumb sheep creature.

The second summer, I think 't was, after Ike come there to live, Mr. Atkins must send Tilda off to Worcester town to see her aunt, who was as much like him as one pea is like another. Money was her god, and human souls didn't count till you 'd

got a good lot of that. You see, Tilda was gettin' near her majority, and if she got a rich husband through her father's means he'd have to put her where such husbands grew thicker than they did in Westboro'.

Tilda was gone nigh on to two months, and we was all dreadful glad to have her back again. The old man had had several letters from his sister during the two months — that is, Mrs. Atkins told Ike so, but she knowed just as much what was in 'em as one of the bricks in the chimney-place, but we could all guess. Mr. Atkins would be all the time a-rubbin' his hands together and chucklin' to himself, and he held his head as high and talked as loud as Solomon in all his glory. But Tilda seemed dreadful shy of Ike, and I was downright mad with her because she

never let him get a word with her at all. And Ike — well, he was the sorrowfullest critter that ever lived.

And now I'm coming to something that none on us who took part in it can forget to our dyin' day. I'm sure I can't; for then, for the first time in my life as an Atkins clock, — I ran down! But I was n't to blame; you 'll see that when you hear.

One day, about a week after Tilda had got back, as near as I can remember, old Josh came in when the dinner-horn was blowed, fetchin' with him a strange man, who walked up kinder familiar to Tilda, and shook hands and acted as if he'd like to kiss her. I declare, I e'enamost forgot to tick; I was so dumbfounded at the sight, a cold draft run up my back. I looked at Mrs. Atkins and Ike. She had the spider

in her hand, just off the fire, where she 'd been fryin', and her face was red as it could be from the heat. But then I see something in her face I never noticed before, and I thought 't was lucky in Mr. What's-his-name that he did n't really kiss Tilda, for I do believe her ma would have throwed all that bilin' fat over him; and him not so bad-lookin' a lot, either, I must allwo.

Ike never noticed nothing, and shook hands with the new feller as natural as could be, and set down and went to eatin' his pork and greens as if they was of more consequence than forty strangers.

Tilda and her ma could n't seem to eat much, and I guess they was considerable relieved when the dinner come to a close. But just as soon as the company had said he 'd had a great sufficiency, old Josh rose

from his chair, cleaned his throat, and, pompous as the sea-serpent, made us a speech: "Wife," says he, "and Lemuel, my son, and you, Ike Saunders, I want you to know this is Tilda's husband that is to be. They fell in love with each other in Worcester. He's got some property, and I've said he could have her if he wants her. Tilda's aunt fixed it all up with her. And I think about Thanksgivin' time we'll have Parson Parkman in, and have the knot tied. And I guess that's all you need to know about it." With that, he was just pushin' out his chair when Ike, who looked at first as tho' he'd been struck by lightnin', springs up and yells: "You old scoundrel, to sell your own flesh and blood! She's mine, by the power of love and the grace of God! She's promised herself to me! Tilda, Tilda, tell 'em you

love me! Oh, why can't you speak!" But Tilda just sat with her face like stone, and only twisted her fingers, and then I knowed how she was goin' to look some day in her coffin.

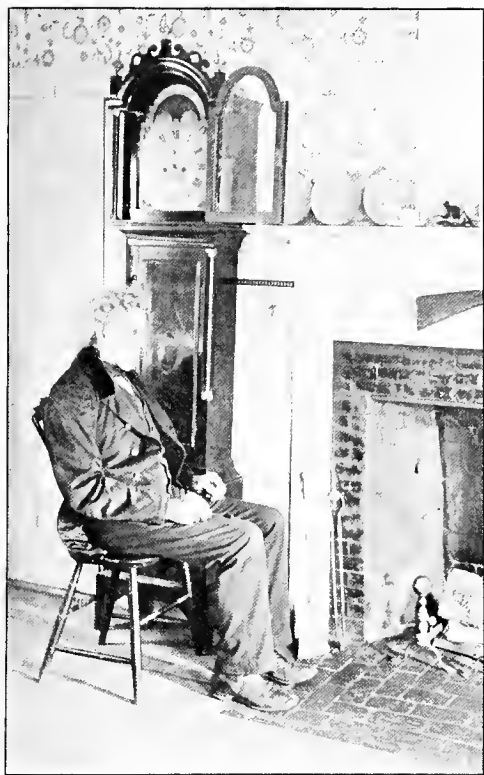
Old Josh was a sight to see, just foam-in' at the mouth like a wild horse. He shook his fist at Ike, and shouted: "You sarpint, you! You cunning fox, to creep into my house and deceive me this way, and steal my darter's affections. She love *you*! Why, you ain't good enough to lay down in the dirt she's walked on! You ain't worth a good pair of shoes! You get out of this or I'll shoot you!" And with that he grabbed for the old Queen's arm that hung over the chimbley-piece. But Mrs. Atkins was too quick for him, and throwed herself on to him, and held him tight, like a cat — he bel-

lerin', and she with her sharp chin pressed into his back and her little arms twisted about him, and hollerin': "Remember, Joshua, who you be! Remember the Bible says, 'I will repay,' and — and — I ain't a-goin' to let go, not if you tear me in pieces!" But just then poor Ike, who'd been imploring Tilda to say something, give a lurch, and over he went on to the kitchen floor. That seemed to wake Tilda up, and she jumps and throws herself on to him, and she lifts up his poor face, that was like snow, and kisses it, and moans and cries over him. Then she draws his head up on to her breast, and lookin' up where Lem was spelling her mother, and holding his father as tight as a clothespin, she says, as if she did n't fear nothing and nobody any more: "Yes, it's true, I love him, and I've been mean,

and wicked, and cruel! If he dies, I'll die too."

"And," says the Worcester beau, who'd been standing as still as the broom, "I've been took in by you and your sister, Mr. Atkins. I wouldn't marry your darter now for the best farm in Worcester County — not if she come and begged me on her knees!" And with that, bang! goes the door, and out goes the beau, and nobody ever see him in our parts again.

Well, I don't need, I think, to say how they patched up the quarrel. It was worse, for awhile, than if one of them Western tornadoes had struck the farm, folks seemed so crazy and shook up. But Ike didn't die, then, and Tilda she married him, as you may guess; but they didn't live to her father's house, you may depend. The old man had got a check,



"But that day of the crash was the time old Josh
let me run down."

and Mrs. Atkins she was n't fool enough to let him have the bits in his teeth again; but still, nothing could ever make him a saint, or anything within a thousand mile of it.

But that day of the crash was the time old Josh let me run down. He went off to bed and teetotally forgot me.

Oh, dear! Now that I've got to tellin' of the past, I could run on all day and a year, but I s'pose I must stop. I feel, however, before I walk off to my corner, that I ought to confess one thing; I shall stand there peacefuller if I do.

When old Josh was a-foamin', and just as he reached for his gun, I was tremblin' so that I was afraid I'd fall over. And then there came this evil prayer into my heart: "If I fall, let me fall on old Josh, and let it be a regular salawounder, but not so's 'twill kill him."

But I've been so thankful ever since that my prayer was n't heard. And I've really been glad, seein' how near to a crime I've come, that my strikin' days are over.

THE TEAPOT.

THERE! Stare, all you people, if you wish! It does n't hurt. I shall never care much any more. But I cared once, ah! did I not?

Life began so charmingly with me! No one could have been better pleased with his surroundings and prospects than I.

I was born to extreme splendor; for in the London shop where I found myself there were many elegant creatures like myself, dressed handsomely, all of them, and fairly radiant with good looks and good health. On the shelves, and displayed in cases, were hundreds of gorgeous things, the

uses of which I then did not know. The sparkle and glitter of all the objects about me, and that I was so ready to reflect, filled me with happiness, and I congratulated myself on my extreme good fortune in being in such royal company. I really thought at first that we must have been made to be worshipped, for the clerks were so careful and respectful in their handling, and used the softest fabrics in restoring our color if we were so unfortunate as to lose it. Besides, so many people came in from the street to see, admire, and comment upon our beauty. I can see again, in vision, the chairs that were set down at our door, out of which stepped many a bewigged lord or farthingaled lady, and as they took their stately way through the rows of bowing and smiling clerks and scribes, their cuffs and ruffs shook off sweet odors as

though they were straight come from Araby itself.

And once there was indeed a great commotion, when the prince himself, in a grand coach, with outriders in red and gold, did drive up with a great clatter and flourish. But I did think it would be for one's greater ease if he did use the chair, for what with the wretched paving and the many deep holes and the black mud, not even the being a prince might save one from a frightful lurching, and being thrown hither and yon till one's bones cracked and one's flesh were made soft as paste. It was a fine sight, though, as I remember it. But the prince's words, it was whispered, as he alighted, were not for ears polite.

As soon, however, as I had grown used to the place, and had learned somewhat of

the language, I realized my true mission : I was a servant ; a slave ; a panderer to human fashion and appetite. But that did not altogether cast down my spirits. I was of a proud turn, and reasoned that it did not much matter so long as I could still remain in good company. What cared I who owned me, were he or she of good quality ! So many persons had looked at me in particular, had lifted my little cap and admired the curve of my nose, that when I learned that one of my neighbors had been sold to Lord Dickie, I was sure that something more fortunate still was in store for me. I even said to myself : “ Who knows but the prince has already taken a fancy to me and will send a lord in waiting to fetch me soon ! And, unspeakable ecstasy ! the queen herself may wish to procure me to grace her lunch ! ”



"Had lifted my little cap, and admired the curve of
my nose."

Ah, dreadful day! when that boisterous sea-captain from North America got his evil eye upon me. Into our shop he came rolling, with a quid of tobacco in his cheek and a canvas bag filled with good gold pieces in his fist. He had been directed by a certain Mr. John Maverick, of the Boston Colony, to purchase and bring home to him for sale in his own little shop a lot of teapots, with many other things the making of which was not then known to the savages in those parts.

Spare me the story of the sale of myself and several friends, the surrender of my dream of the prince and the royal lunches, the packing in tight, dark boxes, our transportation through the London streets, our trip across the ocean, that consumed, so far as we could reckon, a good forty days and nights, then our release and exhibi-

tion in Mr. Maverick's window in Federal street, Boston.

On my dreary way over the ocean I had plenty of time to rebuild my shattered castles. I again was the favorite of fortune. "Maybe," I thought, "I am reserved for the wigwam of some enchanting Indian princess. Or if even but the governor of the colony choose me, it may be better for my morals to be his servant than a member of the household of so dissipated a fellow as the present heir to the British crown." So I tried to comfort myself in my most miserable state.

But how astonished was I to find in this wild country so considerable a town, and real gentlemen and ladies walking the streets! Nowhere, although I looked in every direction, did I see a single wigwam; while the few aborigines who passed

our window did seem most loathsome to my city eyes, and did seem to lack much in ordinary cleanness. They could not at all stand in comparison with their white brethren. Certainly no fair Indian maid ever appeared in that shop to look at teapots or anything else. But, as before, I was the object of great attention. I was introduced to an assemblage of notables; for our shop was quite a meeting-place for all those persons of consequence who liked to be brought together to exchange the news, while one was sure to catch here the very latest and spiciest bit of gossip. But how confounded I was to see two of my companions on the trip from London actually preferred before me; sold, alas! to the governor himself. That *was* a crusher, indeed!

I think I must have lost color; I could

not weep in those days, I had not yet learned. But Mr. Maverick one morning remarked that I was growing dull, and was about to fetch his cloth and powder to refresh me when there entered the store one who proved to be at last my fate.

Spare me again! No further dreams of elegant luxury. No place of pomp in an executive mansion. No fine ladies and gentlemen beaming their affection and admiration! Ugh! a common farmer's brewer that I was to be forever, or till I might, fortunately, weep myself dry and melt away on the kitchen hearth. But while I was lamenting my dismal prospect, Mr. Maverick had wrapped me safely up and given me into the hands of Farmer Bowman, who put me into his saddle bag and mounted and rode off.

I can tell you nothing of the journey,

except that we must have stopped one night in some tavern. I knew it must be a tavern by the clinking of glasses and the swearing of a considerable company. By noon of the next day we had come to the end of our journey, and a lonely place my despairing gaze rested upon; for Farmer Bowman had taken me from my wrappings and held me aloft as he approached his own door. Not another house in sight; the woods stretching far on both sides the path.

But there was a glad and cheerful greeting from Mistress Bowman and the son, Dan, who were at the door; and glad enough they seemed to have the husband and father home again.

Well, it was some compensation to me, in my extreme misery, that they, in a sense, took me at once to their kind

hearts. They were so genuinely honest and sincere! "Of the right sort, surely," thought I.

Nothing would do but they must be having me at the fire at once. And when the tea did turn out bad, the excellent creatures laid it to my being new and inexperienced. Time salves many a wound, and does wonders for teapots as well as human beings, if it does not spoil them.

And so, accepting the inevitable at last, being gently and persistently wooed by my new friends, I grew fond of the plain New England home and the sturdy characters of my owners.

I suppose it would have been impossible to tell you anything of my further life there that would be at all interesting, had it not been for love and Indians. Thus

far I had not a single close experience with either.

Our Dan was a splendid young fellow : tall, with cheeks like a pippin, and, withal, as strong as an ox. After a while, I noticed that on certain nights of the week he was in the habit of carefully arraying himself in his best garments, which to my London eyes seemed but indifferent, mounting his horse, and riding towards the east. Goodwife Bowman seemed always to take a most lively interest in his preparations and departure, and always put a fresh long candle, lighted, in the window ere she lay down for the night. Nothing was ever said, and to me these things seemed for a long time quite strange and unaccountable. But I came to know the reason, and, in my turn, was inspired with a lively satisfaction and joy.

We were soon to have another member added to our family in the person of Miss Nancy Rhodes, a neighboring farmer's daughter, who was, I could see, in high favor with Farmer Bowman and his wife. Everything seemed auspicious: the spinning-wheels were humming, the crops were proving fine, neighborly visits were made between the two farms, and I was entirely in love, myself, with "our" Nan, as we already were fond of calling her. Such light and laughter as she brought into our dull place! When she had gone away, a good bit of the comfort and cheerfulness seemed to depart with her, and we were always more quiet and serious for a time. I was, therefore, impatient for the day that should make her ours entirely.

Only a week before the day set for the

minister to come from the West Parish, we, in these parts, were all startled by the news that the savages were broken loose upon our peaceful neighbors in Medfield, and had barbarously murdered many of them and had burned most of the houses. All the young men, and those not needed for the protection of their own homes, were called to meet at a certain point, then to go out upon the track of those fiends and, if possible, cut them in pieces.

Goodwife Bowman with her own hands cleaned the musket and fastened Dan's belt around his waist, while Farmer Bowman got ready the horse and brought him to the door. There was a kiss and a blessing — and our dear, brave boy was gone.

I cannot, even now, after the snows of a lifetime have drifted upon the graves of all the friends most concerned in the

sorrows of that time, go over the days that passed. I can only say that Farmer Rhodes and his family came over to our place to stay for the better protection of all, going every morning to his place to care for his live creatures, and gleaning what news was possible on the way.

We heard that the pursuers had come up with the savages, and had killed some of them; then nothing, till one day, nearly a month after that, one rides up to our door to tell us that we need have no further fear; the Indians were all killed, or driven far into the northern wilderness. But when we did pray for some news of our Dan, he could only look troubled, and stammer that several of the young men had laid them down in death upon the battlefield. Yet he could say, indeed, that none had seen Dan's body, though

they had seen him fall in a place where the wood was most dense; and they had searched long and faithfully for him, but he did never again appear before them.

Then, indeed, there was sobbing and wailing, the bride upon her mother's bosom, and we all convulsed and torn by our dreadful grief.

No one doubted that Dan was dead. The neighbors, far and near, came to speak comfortingly to us, or to mingle their tears with ours.

So the days dragged on, and the Rhodes family went back to their farm, leaving Nan — now so quiet and sad, but dearer to us than ever — with us.

As time passed, we all fell into our old habits; I at my place by the fire did brew the most comforting drink, but I could not sing as of old.

One evening in November, when Farmer Bowman had come in from the barn with his pails of foaming milk, and the goodwife was busy with her supper, and I was set on my bed of live coals, there was a wild cry, and I looked at Nan, who had been sitting by the fire, with her face in her hands, weeping, but who was now standing in the fire-glow, with her hands pressed to her bosom and her face all white and quivering, and her great eyes were staring at the open door. And there I saw, standing in the black opening, something, — was it man or ghost? — like nothing I had ever seen before. It seemed scarcely man, it was so haggard and corpse-like, and — “Oh, my God! it’s Dan!” I heard Farmer Bowman, in a sort of choking scream, say.

Then it staggered in, and such a moaning and laughing and hugging I never



"Farmer Bowman had come in from the barn with his pails of foaming milk."

witnessed, and mortal teapot never will again!

Well, I do truly believe I saved all those dear friends from being downright insane with joy.

I was so agitated that all at once I went off into a fit of hysterics, blubbering and crying and singing all together. So that the tears and the fire made such a hissing that Goodwife Bowman, hearing the noise and smelling the wasting tea, did dart to the rescue.

And never shall I so feel again the joy of being even a servant as that moment when Dan, seeing me in his mother's hands, did beg a drink from me.

Well, "all's well that ends well." And so our Dan escaped from the hands of the Indians, who had held him in bondage and were contemplating putting him to the

torture, was made well again, but many weeks had to pass before we could be so assured. For it seemed at times as if all our love and devotion would not avail to keep the life in poor Dan's body, so enfeebled by wounds and savage cruelty.

Nan, in her maidenly modesty, was for returning soon to her father's house, but we did make such outcry for her stay that so it was.

The winter was passed in quiet contentment, in spite of the clouds that long overshadowed us.

But the wedding, once set for Farmer Rhodes', of course, did actually come off at our place. And well do I remember the day — so different indeed from that former one — a day that would have proved most fitting in its flood of sunshine, with its tokens of peace and plenty on every hand,

but that had been passed by us in such extreme of wretchedness. Now, however, the world lay buried in snow, the icy wind swept around the corners of the house and set the branches of the oaks in front to creaking. But within, all was warmth and bustle and cheer.

But few of our distant friends could break their way through the drifts to us, and those who did, came in with a great sound of stamping and laughter, followed later by Parson Martyn of the West Parish, drawn on a sled by two of his stout young men.

Then, indeed, were we all most solemn and circumspect, as become Christian folk, while the good man, having got his breath, and warmed himself at the blaze, prayed long and earnestly, saying afterwards the words that made our dear Dan and Nan one.

Then supper, with more laughter and cheerful conversation, followed by prayer and the singing of a psalm.

Finally, the departure of the whole company, under a clear heaven and through the snow, the parson drawn again on his sled.

There is for me to add little more. Farmer Bowman and his wife seemed to grow younger with every year in their joy and satisfaction in their children, by whom I was ever treated as an honored and appreciated friend.

It was, very possibly, a well-meant honor for one of their descendants to place me here, after my generations of service, an object lesson to the ambitions and unfaithful; but, to hear the consciousness of my shabbiness and infirmity does at times overwhelm me, I cannot but sigh, "Ah, if my old friends could see me now!" But, alas!

they would not know me. In their hands I was never anything but the pink of neatness, the brilliant reflector of their own fond faces. Even to their generous sympathies I might now appeal in vain. In my enforced leisure, as I gather dust and dulness here, I may at least take some comfort from the reflection that I have been, at any rate, as successful and happy as most of my race.

THE SATIN SHOES.

WELL, this *is* truly delightful, to be again in society after our long exile in a camphor-wood chest in the garret. The eyes of so many curious people, bent upon us, thrill us strangely; but we like it.

This brings them all back again — the gay times of the past, when we were young, and so fond of flirting and tripping the measure; when our buckles were bright and our heels were level; when we could n't, if our everlasting safety depended upon it, keep still if there were fun abroad.

And how happy we were when we were placed for the first time on the feet of the

belle of Plymouth! For that was what Cynthia Holmes was called — the “Belle of Plymouth.” And she deserved the title, too, for she was the prettiest girl — if we do say it — in all the three colonies. O, but you should have seen our Cynthia! We say “our” because our friendship for her was, necessarily, of a very close kind. Complexion like the inside of the big pink conch-shell that Abe Stelbins brought her from one of his voyages in the Atlantic. And when she blushed, the shell was simply nowhere. And her eyes were just as bright as those in the face of the tortoise-shell cat that lay in her grandame’s lap — only never so cunning and cold and cruel, just merry, and full of innocent laughter. And her hair was so thick and long that she had only to give it a twist or two, stick a high comb in the knot, and pull out and turn



"For that was what Cynthia Holmes was called — the
Belle of Plymouth."

over her finger the locks at the side, and there she was — the most bewitching, enchanting creature that ever turned the head of an adorer!

We couldn't help wondering, more than once, why some of the sparks that haunted her steps didn't run off with her in sheer desperation, she made them so crazy by her airs and graces.

But I remember she was always doing queer, out-of-the-way things; but if any other girl had done them — well, no other girl would have thought of doing them, that's certain!

Why, there was one ball at the tavern hall, and Cynthia was there, of course, and a crowd of beaux 'round her as usual. After a while she was missing, and people began to say, "Where's Miss Cynthia?" And they were beginning to look anxious

when into the hall she walked, her hair flying from the wind. "And," she says, to some of the people who were nearest, "where do you think I've been? Guess, now."

Well, one said: "I guess you've been down to the point to see Granny Flint, to have your fortune told." And one said: "I guess you've been to the graveyard, sitting on the tombstone of Elder Brewster." And another said: "I guess you have been to the parson to have you and me cried next Sunday."

Then up came Lance Ricker, in his slouching way, and drawled out: "Will you marry the one that guesses right?" "Yes," says she, quick as lightning. "Then you've been down sitting on Pilgrim's Rock," says he. At that she turned red and then white, for she was n't

a girl to go back on her word. And she *had* been down to Pilgrim Rock, sure. "How do you know?" asked she, to gain time. "I can see the sand on your boots," says he. "O," says she, brightening up, "I *did* go to the rock, but I never sat down on it—so!" And with that she lifted her chin in the air, swept him a low curtsy, and went off to dance with Reckon White.

Then there was another time when she served all her beaux such a trick. They had been proposing to her, one after another, and to get rid of them she said that the next time the wind blew hard off shore she would get into a boat without oars or anything, and when she had drifted twenty-five minutes they were all to get into separate boats and row out for her; and the man that first got her should marry her.

But all the rest must promise never to pester her with an offer again. Well, the day came, and the wind was awfully strong, blowing straight out to Clark's island. Cynthia came down to the shore, and stepped on board her boat like a queen, and was pushed off. All those young fellows stood by their boats, ready, when the time-keeper said "Go," to spring to their oars. Well, when Cynthia was looking like a speck, far away across the harbor, the word was given, and away they all went.

And what do you think! Just as the foremost one got within a few fathoms of Cynthia's boat, and when he was gasping through his set teeth, "I've got you this time, sure!" and as Cynthia was drifted close to the shore of Clark's island, 'round the little point shot another boat, and before Luke Brewster could get his hands on

her, Cynthia's own brother, William, who was as big a joker as she was, had pulled her into his boat, and shouted out: "We'll excuse you, gentlemen, for *this* time!" It made lots of hard feeling, and folks talked a good deal, and all the beaux had a meeting, after they recovered from their exertions, and took a solemn oath — so it was reported — never to notice Miss Cynthia again: never to invite her anywhere, or ask her to dance, or fetch her calash, or open the spinet, — for she could sing like a nightingale. Just about that time, fortunately for her, Cynthia's aunt in Boston invited her to spend the winter with her. And it was in Boston that we slippers — we were twins! — first dawned upon society. That was a gay winter — calls and parties all the time, for Madame Johnson had married an Englishman of wealth, and entertained

royally, for that time. There were lots of young fellows ashore from some of the English ships, and it was the story of the Plymouth beaux all over again.

One of them, a dashing young lieutenant from the "Hornet," did actually steal one of us, by bribing Madame Johnson's maid, and carried us on board his ship; but madame found it out, and made such a fuss that he brought it back and almost went down on his knees to beg forgiveness.

It was a sad day for us when the "Hornet" sailed, as she did suddenly, in consequence of orders from the admiralty office, and without allowing our young lieutenant to get a word with Miss Cynthia.

We went home to Plymouth soon after that. All the beaux broke their oath, and came crowding 'round again, but Miss



"She would come and take us out and stand with
us in her hand."

Cynthia's spirit seemed quite gone. When she said "No," this time, she said it very gently, but in such a way that every bean knew it was of no use.

Miss Cynthia never heard from the lieutenant again, and she never introduced us to Plymouth society, although we were both very willing and anxious. But she put us away in the chest with the dresses that went with us, and once in awhile, when no one was noticing, she would come and take us out, and stand with us in her hand, and then I knew she was thinking of the lieutenant, because she cried and stroked us gently, and when she put us back there were always teardrops splashed over our soles or insteps.

I don't know how old she was, exactly, when one day she brought her niece, who, by the way, was the living image of her-

self, to the chest; and taking us and all the rest of the fine things out, gave them to her, and told her to take and wear them and be happy in them, because she should never want them again. And then she burst right out crying and ran off to her own room.

And that night, when Parson Rogers, of Duxbury, came to call, — for he'd been hanging 'round for some time, — she told him she thought she would be willing to try the air of Duxbury as the minister's wife, and live on the stipend his people would vote them.

We heard that she did make a very excellent helpmeet, and was greatly esteemed for her virtues and her horror of all frivolity. But, if I had had the making of her tombstone, I would have carved on it a pair of little shoes.

